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ABSTRACT

Popular music is often characterized as a short work with a prominent melody and simple chordal accompaniment. Yet, teaching with pop music in the era of standards-based curriculum can present challenges. These standards offer teachers a blueprint for teaching music performance, composition, improvisation, and the relationship of music to other arts, disciplines, and culture. This collection of six lesson plans aims for students to be able to meet the nine National Standards for Music Education through studying popular music. Each lesson cites objectives, lists materials needed, and gives step-by-step procedures for classroom implementation. The lessons focus on the following popular music elements: (1) "Melody"; (2) "Harmony"; (3) "Arranging and Improvising"; (4) "Rhythm"; (5) "Interdisciplinary Connections"; and (6) "Musical Roots." Attached is a list of the nine standards. (BT)

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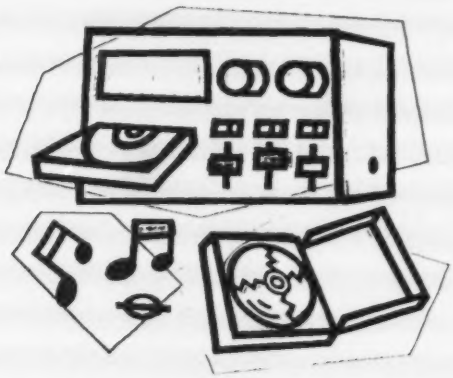
THE GUIDE TO TEACHING WITH POPULAR MUSIC



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A Note to Teachers from MENC: The National Association for Music Education

Popular music, like all music, is a reflection of the culture that produced it. And if you've ever introduced a pop music piece to your middle or high school students, you know these teenagers respond intuitively and often enthusiastically in the classroom to the songs they listen to in their homes, in the car, and with their friends.

Pop music is often characterized as a short work with a prominent melody and simple chordal accompaniment. Yet, teaching with pop music in the era of standards-based curriculum can present challenges.

Music education is becoming more sophisticated with the advent of the National Standards for Music Education--voluntary standards developed by MENC: The National Association for Music Education in 1994. These standards offer teachers a blueprint for teaching music performance, composition, improvisation, and the relationship of music to other arts, disciplines, and culture. At the same time, music educators are trying to reach more and more students today. Teaching with popular music becomes part of a broad-based effort to include more of America's children in a balanced, sequential music education program. MENC is pleased to be working with Clairol Herbal Essences and *NSYNC to provide these pop music lessons written to help you teach the Nine National Standards for Music Education.

We encourage you to take a look at the lessons, and, if you like what you see, download and use them with your students this fall. You will need to use your own copy of *NSYNC's CD--or ask one of your students to share a copy with the class for these lessons.

We hope you'll find this a fruitful exercise whether you teach choral, instrumental, or general music. Good luck, and have fun!

These lessons were reviewed by Will Schmid, professor of music at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Hunter March, associate professor of music at the University of Texas-Austin.

Lesson 1

MELODY

"Tearin' Up My Heart"
by Max Martin and Kristian Lundin

National Standards 1, 5, 7--Singing; Reading and notating; Evaluation

Objectives

Students will learn melody of "Tearin' Up My Heart" while demonstrating how to:

- sing accurately and with breath control
- read at sight simple melodies
- evaluate the quality and effectiveness of a music performance

Materials

CD *NSYNC
CD player
"Tearin' Up My Heart" sheet music from MENC Web site
20 minutes of class time

Procedures:

1. Look at the music.

- Hand out "Tearin' Up My Heart" sheet music to students.
- Invite students to read through noting the lyrics.
- Invite them to read through a second time, concentrating on the melody line.
- Ask if the melody moves by leaps or steps. Where is the largest leap? Where are some steps? Ask students to find the lowest and the highest note.

2. Listen to the music.

- Ask your students if they think the recorded version on CD will follow the notes on the sheet music. Lead a short discussion on how recorded versions may differ from written scores mentioning rubato and ornamentation. Also discuss how tenors read in treble cleff, but sing an octave lower. Ask the students how they predict the recorded version will sound if they are not familiar with the song.
- Play the CD, inviting the students to follow with the sheet music. Ask students to look carefully at measures 23 through 28. Does the singer in verse 2 sing the melody differently from the singer in

verse 1? If so, how? (The singer in verse 2 adds ornamentation to measures 24 and 28.)

- Ask your students what else they noticed about the melody while listening and reading the music. (Notice places where the soloist slides between notes, like in measure 14, and additional harmonies not notated beginning in measure 21.)
- Ask if anyone may think that the addition of vocal harmonies and ornaments adds to the effectiveness of the music.
- What other pop singers use ornaments like this? (Whitney Houston, Mariah Carey, Boyz II Men) If you wish, discuss the fact that this type of improvisation/ornamentation is especially prominent in African American song styles. Note that *NSYNC crosses over style boundaries. They use this type of ornamentation in a mainstream "pop" context.

3. Sing the music.

- Examine the first page of music. Ask students how long the phrases are (2 measures). Which phrase (measure 5) is longer than the others? Does the singer breathe in that phrase? (No)
- Invite students to read the melody, singing only on an open "du." If enough students are familiar with the music, then sing the lyrics.
- Practice singing on du over two measures without a breath.
- Invite students to read lyrics, then sing melody with lyrics (if they haven't already).
- Ask student volunteers to sing the melody, adding their own ornaments. Invite constructive comments on the effectiveness of the ornaments.

NOTE:

*The recording is sung an octave lower than notated. Because your students may be familiar with the recording, singing in the notated octave may seem unnatural for them. Boys and altos should sing the same range as *NSYNC. Sopranos may wish to sing it in the written octave. Please caution your students not to overuse their chest voices.*

Lesson 2

HARMONY

"Tearin' Up My Heart"
by Max Martin and Kristian Lundin

National Standards 1, 5, 6--Singing; Reading and notating; Listening and analyzing

Objectives

Students will learn to sing "Tearin' Up My Heart" while demonstrating how to:

- sing music written in two and three parts
- read at sight simple melodies
- describe specific music events in a given aural example

Materials

CD *NSYNC
CD player
"Tearin' Up My Heart" sheet music from MENC Web site
20 minutes of class time

Procedures:

1. Look at the harmony.

   - Hand out "Tearin' Up My Heart" sheet music to students. Ask students to read through looking for vocal harmony. (It is in the bridge--measures 43-58.)
   - After locating the bridge, discuss the two-part and three-part harmony with students.

2. Listen to the harmony.

   - Play "Tearin' Up My Heart," inviting the students to follow with the sheet music.
   - Ask your students if the vocalists followed the music. Was there vocal accompaniment that is not notated? What else did they notice while listening and reading the music?
   - Point out the two-part harmony at the beginning of the bridge (measure 43 -- top line - melody, bottom line - harmony) and the introduction of three-part harmony (measure 51 -- middle line - melody, outer lines - harmony).
   - Compare the two-part harmony with the three-part harmony. What is the difference? (The three-part harmony fills out the chord.) Are the chords the same? (Yes, because the chords are the same in

measures 43 and 51. The chord in measure 51 includes all four notes of the chord. The chord in measure 43 includes only three notes.)

- Extension: Discuss harmony as a function of melody and bass line. Additionally, discuss the chord structure of the bridge.

3. Sing the harmony.

- Invite students to sing the lower vocal line of the bridge (m 43 - 51).
- Have students repeat this line. As they sing, play or sing quietly the other vocal line.
- Repeat until students have learned the lower line.
- Invite students to sing the upper vocal line of the bridge.
- Have students repeat this line. As they sing, play or sing quietly the other vocal line.
- Repeat until students have learned the upper line.
- Have bulk of class sing together the two-part harmony. If you have students capable of singing the third part, have them enter at m. 51.
- If time permits, switch parts and allow students to sing a different line.
- Perform song as a class or in small groups with the recording.

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Lesson 3

ARRANGING AND IMPROVISING

"Tearin' Up My Heart"
by Max Martin and Kristian Lundin

National Standards 3, 4--Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments; Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines

Objectives

Students will

- improvise harmonic accompaniments
- arrange simple pieces for voices or instruments

Materials

"Tearin' at My Heart" sheet music from MENC Web site
*NSYNC CD
CDs of popular music groups with harmony (try Take 6, Boys II Men, Manhattan Transfer, The Platters, or the Temptations)
CD player
30 minutes

Procedures:

1. Listen to Harmony.

   - Play examples of harmony from popular vocal music (See suggestions above). You could even ask students to bring in examples, but you may want to reserve the right to approve before playing. Ask students if they ever make up their own harmony to songs on the radio or in other venues where they sing. Finish with playing "Tearin' Up My Heart."

2. Review the Harmony.

   - Review the harmony learned in last lesson from the bridge of "Tearin' Up My Heart."
   - Divide students into melody and harmony sections.
   - Play pitches for students by rolling the chords and then play the chords simultaneously for student sections to sing or play.

3. Arrange the Harmony.

   - Place students in small groups.

- Depending on the age and ability of your students, select either the first or the second eight bars of the bridge from "Tearin' Up My Heart."
- Review the melody line and discuss harmony. If students have guitars or rock band experience, they may be familiar with arranging. Or discuss techniques some musicians use to harmonize. (Thinking in either vertical or horizontal lines, for example.)
- Suggest the student groups "make up" their own harmony. While all but one member of each group sing the harmony, have the other member experiment by singing harmony. Have students take turns "making up" the harmony.
- Ask each student group to select a favorite harmony.
- Give the student groups practice time.
- Invite or select groups to sing or play their versions for the class.

4. Extension. For advanced classes, have groups notate their arrangements.

NOTE:
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Lesson 4

RHYTHM

"I Want You Back"

*by Dennis Pop and Max Martin. Sung by *NSYNC*

National Standards 2, 5--Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music; Reading and notating music

Objectives

Students will

- identify and define standard notation symbols for rhythm, tempo
- perform on at least one instrument accurately and independently, alone and in small and large ensembles
- perform music representing diverse genres and cultures, with expression appropriate for the work being performed
- read quarter and eighth notes
- use standard notation to record musical ideas

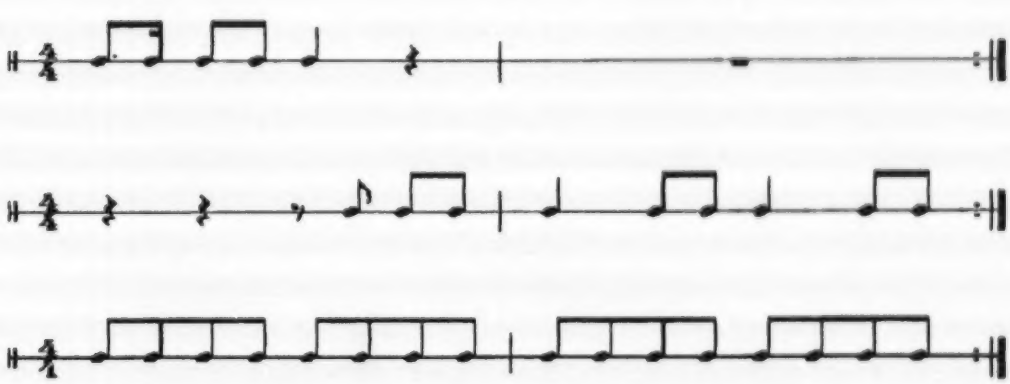
Materials

"I Want You Back" sheet music from MENC Web site
*NSYNC CD
CD player
classroom percussion instruments
metronome
chalk board

Procedures:

1. Look at the Rhythm.

- Before students arrive in class, on chalk board copy the following rhythm lines:



- Also, prepare metronome with by synchronizing beat from "I Want You Back" (♩=112).
- The rhythm pattern notated can be heard beginning in measures 9-12 of "I Want You Back." It can be heard prominently on the recording.

2. Practice the Rhythm.

- Turn on the metronome.
- When students are seated, introduce rhythmic pattern #1. Have students clap this. (Don't give away the name of the song that this section leads to.)
- Introduce rhythmic pattern #2 on the chalk board and have students clap the pattern.
- Introduce rhythmic pattern #3 and have students clap the pattern.
- Divide class into three groups. Assign group one to clap rhythm #1. Assign group two to clap rhythm #2. Assign group three to clap rhythm #3.
- Invite groups 1 and 2 to clap their lines together. Repeat.
- As groups 1 and 2 continue to repeat their rhythm, add group 3.
- When you determine that they are ready, have them play the pattern on classroom instruments (sticks, wood block, drum).
- Ask students if they can think of a song that the rhythm might fit.

3. Listen to the Song.

- While students resume playing the rhythmic pattern, turn on CD player queued up to "I Want You Back."
- After discovering the song they are playing, students may want to comment on the song, the rhythm, or the percussion instruments they used.
- Listen to "I Want You Back," asking students "Where does the percussion begin?" "Does the percussion entrance seem to alter the tempo?"
- Lead a short discussion about percussion as the "backbone" of pop music and its role establishing beat. Tell them that the rhythmic construction of drums and bass is often called the "groove" of the song. Often pop recordings are laid down in tracks, where each part is recorded separately. First percussion, then bass, then others. This method dates back to Les Paul in the early 1950s with his recording of "How High the Moon." You may point out to students that they have been learning the song in a similar manner.

NOTE:
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*for them. Boys and altos should sing the same range as *NSYNC. Sopranos may wish to sing it in the written octave. Please caution your students not to overuse their chest voices.*

LESSON 5

INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS

"Tearin' Up My Heart"
*by Max Martin and Kristian Lundin. Sung by *NSYNC*
"I Want You Back"
*by Dennis Pop and Max Martin. Sung by *NSYNC*

National Standards 7, 8--Evaluating music and music performances; Understanding relationships between music and the other arts

Objectives

Students will

- compare in two or more arts the characteristic materials of each art (sound in music, human inter-relationships in theatre, movement in dance, visual stimuli in visual arts)
- compare how different arts can transform similar events, scenes, emotions, or ideas

Materials

*NSYNC CD
CD Player
*NSYNC music videotaped from television for educational purposes
Your choice of additional materials related to theme
15 minutes of class time

Previous Experience:

- Students should have been taught at least one lesson in MENC's *NSYNC series and be familiar with *NSYNC songs

Procedures:

1. Listen to Music

   - Play "I Want You Back"
   - Lead short class discussion about what story the lyrics convey. (Lost love.) How do elements in the music contribute to that story? How do tempo, key, instrumental accompaniment, and music texture help portray the story? What about vocal techniques? Are there vocal slides or catches used to convey ideas? Who is telling the story? What is he feeling?

2. Look at Video

- Show *NSYNC music video you have taped for educational purposes. (Please see copyright note below.)
- Lead short classroom discussion asking: Does this video--a mini-drama--tell the same story as the song alone? How do the members of the group tell the story in the video? Think about emotions shown, interactions with others, choreography. What do you notice about camera angles, lighting, scenery, time of day. How do these tell the story?

3. Make Connections

- Ask your students if they can think of books, movies, opera, artwork, or dance that might share the same theme? (The arts are rich with stories of lost love, but you might include Shakepeare's *Romeo and Juliet,* Bizet's *Carmen,* Lerner and Loewe's *Camelot,* the movies *Casablanca* and *Titanic,* pop songs "Teen Angel" and "Yesterday," and country songs "Blue" and "Your Cheatin' Heart." These are just starters--you'll think of many appropriate for your class's age and maturity level.)

(The music video is not provided by MENC. Have students watch *NSYNC music videos on television at home; or check with your school's attorney about taping for educational purposes.)

MUSICAL ROOTS

Lesson 6

Objectives

Students will learn

- relationship of today's pop vocal music and other American vocal genres
- describe distinguishing characteristics of representative music genres and styles from a variety of cultures

National Standard 9--Understanding music in relation to history and culture

Materials

CD Player and/or audiocassette tape player
CDs and/or audiocassettes including:
*NSYNC; New Kids on the Block; EnVogue; TLC; Boyz II Men; Take Six; C Note; Bee Gees; Manhattan Transfer; Mamas and the Papas; Beach Boys; Eagles; Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young; Beatles; Temptations; Supremes; Four Tops; Platters; Drifters; The Kingston Trio; The Hi-Los; The Andrews Sisters; and choral groups led by Fred Waring, Robert Shaw, or Norman Luboff
2 class periods with 15 minutes each

Previous Experience:

- Students should have been taught at least one lesson in MENC's *NSYNC series and be familiar with *NSYNC songs.

Procedures:

1. Survey Students

- Conduct a survey of your students. Hand out blank paper and ask students to write the names of 5 pop vocal groups, similar to, but predating *NSYNC. (Answers will vary. Many may not be able to name five--but you may expect Back Street Boys [1998-99], Hanson [1997], New Kids on the Block [1989--mid- 90s and there is a current revival], Boyz II Men [1988--now], En Vogue [1990--now], TLC [1991--now], The Spice Girls [1994--now].)
- Write answers on chalkboard. Arrange the answers in a time line with *NSYNC at the top, descending chronologically with other groups.

2. Listen to Examples

- Playing short examples of CDs and tapes of groups you've brought in. Lead a classroom discussion about pop vocal groups from each decade from the nineties going back to the forties. (You may consider asking students to bring in examples, but you may want to reserve the right to approve the CDs according to your community and school standards.)
- Ask questions about use of choral blend, articulations, attacks and releases, harmony.

3. Discuss Musical Roots

- Ask questions about origins of groups (Great Britain, California, New York City, Detroit, etc...) and how their background may add to their distinctive sound.

  For example, The Beach Boys were synonymous with the 1960s California sound just as the Beatles held the standard for the sounds of the 1960s British invasion well into the 1970s.

  Additional vocal groups from California in the late 1960s through the 1970s you might want to mention include the Mamas and the Papas and the Eagles. The 1960s brought the Temptations, the Supremes, and the Four Tops, along with many other African American vocal groups that developed a sound unique to Detriot--Motown. For the rhythm and blues tradition, you might mention The Platters and The Drifters with their first hits playing in the 1950s. For doo-wop tradidtion, you might mention the Jordanaires -- Elvis's back-up group, or groups such as Frankie Lyman and the Teenagers with songs like "Why Do Fools Fall in Love?" Other examples of doo-wop are the Del-Vikings, the Orioles, and the Belmonts.

  Popular music blossomed in large part because of its easy accessibility with the inexpensive portable radios in the 1960s--most teens had them and access to their choice of radio stations wherever they were. More likely than not, the radio stations they listened to played rock music. And it was rock music that articulated the social and political upheavals of the 1950s and 1960s.

  Depending on your time and students' interest, introduce jazz vocal ensembles like Take Six and Manhattan Transfer (begun in 1972)--both known for complex vocal harmonies and some scat singing.

You might trace tight and complex harmonies to the Four Freshmen, the Hi-Los, and, of course, the Andrews Sisters.

These pop and jazz styles would not have developed without the roots of modern choral ensemble. Fred Waring often receives credit for introducing choral popular music alongside the classical. Other masters of bringing pop music to life through choral traditions are Robert Shaw and Norman Luboff.

4. Research for Extra Credit

- Have students research the vocal musical tastes or experiences of their older siblings, parents, neighbors, or grandparents. You may reproduce the form below for students to use and submit in class.

****

Popular Music Research

Name_____

Class Section_____

Teacher_____

Date_____

Please survey members of your family, neighbors, or family friends about vocal music groups they have enjoyed over the years.

1. Name_____ Relation to student_____

2. What vocal groups do you like to listen to?_____

3. What era were those groups popular and are they still?_____

4. What type of music do they sing?_____

5. How did you first hear them? (radio, dance, concert, television)_____

6. Have you ever sung in a vocal group?_____

7. If yes,

a) What kind of group and how large was it?_____

b) Where did it rehearse and perform?_____

c) What music was sung?_____

National Standards for Music Education

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music.
3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.
4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines.
5. Reading and notating music.
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
7. Evaluating music and music performances.
8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

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